MATWATCH

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A WISH OF PEACE FOR YOU

> **---For He who is mighty has done great things to me. And holy IS his name.**
>
> **---Luke 1:49**

The 900-plus of you MATWATCHers are people of all faiths, walks of life, religions and perhaps non-religions. And while I have only been privileged to personally meet a small percentage of you, I feel as if you are an extended, unseen family to me as I weekly check your mailing labels from 46 states and five overseas and north-of-the-border nations.

This is a week in which employees of a number of pro wrestling organizations are going back to work after a pre-Christmas period of athletes getting some well-earned time off from the ring. We, too, are taking a bit of a breather. As most of you read this, Rebecca and I are spending Christmas week with our families in the Georgia cities of Columbus and Waycross before returning to the news grind in west Tennessee New Year's Eve.

Accordingly, in one of two holiday periods of the year, we offer a 12-page double issue to give us an opportunity to recharge the batteries and enjoy some time with our loved ones without the pressures of turning out two weekly editions. Likewise, we hope you are taking time to replenish your lives with the blessings of being near people who mean the most to you. The older I grow and as I see my parents reach senior age, the less I find the giving of gifts significant and the more I value the precious time I have with my family.

This is a period in which we can stop to remember how insignificant the finish of a pro wrestling match is and how microcosmic a simple wrestling newsletter is in the course of human events, despite the intensity with which some regard a publication such as this. Ventures such as MATWATCH, unless they are well-established, have to be labors of personal love. My joy has not come in getting an occasional scoop or in the power of a strong commentary. My thrills have genuinely come in making so many, many friends---though many by mail or telephone---who have a bit of interest in the things I have on my mind, week after week. We have made our mistakes. We have probably been well off the mark on many of our opinions. But they have not been mistakes or opinions of malice, nor aggression. More often than not, they have been errors of simple human judgment.

I have grown to value more this year the friendships of those I have made within the demanding and often ugly world of pro wrestling. To call their names would probably create trouble for many within their respective organizations but they know who they are. I know the odds against which many of them work and respect them greatly for their endeavors, particularly in what has been anything but a banner year for this industry.

Often, we fail to say a simple thank you to those who mean the most to us. I have been overwhelmed with the number of Christmas cards---some with pictures of the latest family additions, personal notes (if you please) inside yearender ballots and annual orders and simple words which have said words to the effect that these few pages every week are looked forward to in your home. Those are the kinds of encouragement which humble us and make us endeavor to do even better.

In this spiritual season, I also think of those who have become estranged from us in the last year, for whatever reasons, and hope that whatever wounds have occurred can be healed in the year ahead. Life is too short for anger and division to rule.

The verse at the top of this face is poignant for me during every Christmas season. Those words have been part of a number of Christmas cantatas in which I have sang or directed in churches. They are a constant reminder that, in my life, the talents and accomplishments I have come from One above. I sincerely hope you know of that same spirit in the coming days ahead. May the peace of this season be with you always.

Steve Beverly

How Steve Voted

THE MATTIES: PICKING THE BEST AND THE REST OF 1990

Four weeks from now, the third MATWATCH ANNUAL will tell the tale of how MATWATCHers across the globe feel about performances in the television ring for 1990. The "Matties" are hardly unique. Virtually every newsletter publishes a year-end edition or annual to reward the tops and flops of wrestling. Since we began in 1988, I have waited until the ballots are all in to share with you my own view of the best and the rest of a given year.

This year, we reduced the number of categories because several in the past have been somewhat duplicative. Plus, with the amount of tabulating time required, we felt it would lessen the headaches of math and, further, make our awards more focused. So, here is your humble newsletter publisher's vote for the 1990 MATTIES. We'll see in the annual how close my choices are to yours:

BEST BROADCAST/CABLE TV MATCH: 1. RIC FLAIR VS. BRIAN PILLMAN, WCW: A classic Flair match which had all the elements of intensity and had one feeling Pillman could score the upset right up to the trunk-hold for the pin. 2. CURT HENNIG VS. TITO SANTANA, WWF: This Intercontinental tourney final would have been my favorite had it gone longer than eight minutes. 3. MIDNIGHT EXPRESS VS. SOUTHERN BOYS, WORLD WIDE: The Southern Boys' upset reminded me much of the victory the Fantastics scored over the M Ex early in their 1988 feud.

BEST PPV MATCH: 1. HULK HOGAN VS. ULTIMATE WARRIOR, WM6: Okay, so there were better-wrestled matches. But one could not find a better *booked* match and the dramatics of the title change were unmatched in 1990. 2. MIDNIGHT EXPRESS VS. SOUTHERN BOYS, BASH '90: Without doubt, the best-wrestled confrontation of the year and proved again just how talented Eaton and Lane are. 3. STEINERS VS. NASTY BOYS, HALLOWEEN HAVOC: I'd have voted Flair-Luger at WRESTLE WAR had it not been for the finish. But this was one of the more brutal affairs of the year and proved how far the Nasties have come.

BEST SUPERCARD: 1. BASH: NEW REVOLUTION, NWA: The drama of the title change was not as heavy as Hogan-Warrior but, in our view, this one packed the best overall quality of any supershow. 2. HALLOWEEN HAVOC, NWA: If they could only have left off JYD-Moondog Rex and the Master Blasters, this one had plenty of zip. 3. SUPERCARD, USWA: My only complaint, other than Jimmy Valiant's appearance, is it was too long.

BEST WEEKLY TV SERIES: 1. THE NEW USWA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING (WMC-TV): Eddie Gilbert as adviser, then booker, has made the difference in this series' resurgence. 2. WWF SUPERSTARS OF WRESTLING: The series had more angles and more weeks of competitive matchups than in the past. 3. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING, NWA: Though the Ole Anderson regime made this an oft-painful experience.

BEST NEW CHARACTERS: 1. UNDERTAKER, WWF: Vince McMahon did what every other wrestling company which has had Mark Callaway could not and did it in one night. 2. MICHAEL WALLSTREET, WCW: Some people have criticized this as a ripoff of the Million $ Man but I like the focus and the fact that in three weeks, the character had enough impact to make USA TODAY. 3. WRESTLING SCHOOL DROPOUT, ICW: This one was Paul E. Dangerously's handiwork during his booking tenure and one of the funniest and freshest acts in ages.

BEST PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER: 1. JIM ROSS, NWA: Still the standard and the best-prepared in the business, even though he'll personally admit some of the Anderson WCW shows made him struggle to find his usual enthusiasm. 2. LANCE RUSSELL, NWA: I can't begin to tell you how much I continue to admire this man, particularly with the number of bad shows he was saddled with in '90. The Teddy Long closings were as close to old Memphis material as WCW will let Lance do. 3. (tie) CHRIS CRUISE, NWA, and CRAIG JOHNSON, USWA: The two best young announcers in wrestling and I hope both have further opportunities in 1991.

BEST COLOR COMMENTATOR: 1. JESSE VENTURA, WWF: The Master is sorely missed and his line, "Maybe Hulkamania will live forever," from WRESTLEMANIA cemented The Body's legend. 2. PAUL E. DANGEROUSLY, NWA: He's worked hard at softening the hard heel image. Some don't like that but as an announcer, he has to in order to keep from being too abrasive. With Jesse now gone, Paul's the best. 3. JERRY LAWLER, USWA: Particularly for the winter when Lawler was still a heel and his weekly stints with Dave Brown would fill up a third of "Lines of the Week."

RISING STAR(S) OF THE YEAR: 1. NASTY BOYS, NWA: I had to eat crow on this one. Knobbs and Saggs absolutely surprised me as to how well they performed. One of Ole Anderson's better moves. 2. EARTHQUAKE, WWF: You may not like his finishing move and you may not be crazy about him but he has been the dominant heel, along with Curt Hennig, in the WWF this year. 3. JEFF GAYLORD, USWA: I don't know if the Ultimate Warrior imitation helps or hurts but if this guy can work with more top-caliber workers, he has a real chance.

BEST SINGLE PERFORMANCE: 1. HULK HOGAN ("Surrendering the WWF Belt to the Ultimate Warrior"), WM6: Those two post-

(Continued on Page 3)

minutes, climaxed by the Hogan-Warrior hug, are indelibly etched in wrestling immortality. 2. EDDIE GILBERT ("Hit-and-Run on Jerry Lawler"), USWA/WMC: Lawler may have ruined the angle by "recovering" too quickly but the blood in Eddie's eye when he went for the car and revved that engine was a tremendous acting job. 3. VINCE McMAHON ("Aftermath of Earthquake Attack on Hulk Hogan"), WWF: I'm not a big fan of Vince's style of commentary but his forged anger at the 'Quake attack and his subdued announcing for the rest of the show were inspired.

BEST TV PERSONALITY: 1. PAUL E. DANGEROUSLY, NWA: I'm giving Paul the nod because of his growth as a commentator and because of Jesse's departure. 2. JESSE VENTURA, WWF: I hope he shows up on another show next fall (he will be doing the syndicated GRUDGE MATCH series). 3. THEODORE R. LONG, NWA: Teddy's role has been allowed to expand, now that they other key managers are gone and that's a plus.

WORST BROADCAST/CABLE MATCH: 1. NIGHTSTALKER VS. SID VICIOUS, CLASH XIII: The worst match on the worst show of the year and probably the worst late-card match on any major NWA show I've ever seen. 2. MAGNUM FORCE VS. GREGG SAWYER/SCOTT WILLIAMS, WCW: I don't know where those two guys came from but all I can remember is that one guy yelling like a banshee every five seconds. 3. DINO BRAVO vs. NIKOLI VOLKOFF, WWF/PTW: My year's not complete if I can't vote for a Dino Bravo match among the worst.

WORST PPV MATCH: 1. JUNKYARD DOG VS. MOONDOG REX, HALLOWEEN HAVOC: Absolutely no business on a pay-per-view show. 2. FREEBIRDS VS. ZENK/PILLMAN, WRESTLE WAR '90: The Freebirds did not want to work in this one and the 27 minutes was excruciating. 3. JAKE ROBERTS VS. BAD NEWS BROWN, WRESTLEMANIA: The best thing from this one is that Bad News is mercifully gone.

WORST SUPERCARD: 1. CLASH XIII: THANKSGIVING THUNDER, NWA: I'm giving it the notch below the No. 2 simply because the NWA is capable of far better and was suitably embarrassed by it. 2. NO HOLDS BARRED: THE MATCH/THE MOVIE, WWF: Some have argued this wasn't a supercard but it was a pay-per-view that Vince turned into a 45-minute railing against cable companies threatening to drop Titan shows. 3. SUMMER SLAM, WWF: Not even the production was up to usual WWF standards.

WORST WEEKLY SERIES: 1. SOUTHEASTERN CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Until mid-fall, this was one of only two live shows left on TV and had to be seen NOT to be believed. 2. ICW: Yes, I'm finally convinced after eight reruns that Vic Steamboat did defeat Tony Atlas for the title. 3. AWA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Not only was it tough to suffer through these, Verne took his one innovation, TEAM CHALLENGE SERIES, and turned it into the most confused conglomeration of clutter one found unintelligible.

WORST PLAY-BY-PLAY ANNOUNCER: 1. J.C. CARSON, SOUTHEASTERN: Not even Henry Higgins could help this guy speak the King's English. Like listening to an off-key opera singer. 2. HERB ABRAMS, UWF: The only announcer I know who asked his color commentator more elementary questions than the host of ROMPER ROOM used to ask her kids. 3. TIM DIX, SCW: A lot better manager than an announcer.

WORST COLOR COMMENTATOR: 1. THUNDERBOLT PATTERSON, NWA: Only the Rocky King "Buckwheat" angle was more offensive by Ole Anderson. If T'bolt wants a reason why wrestling companies don't want to use him, he should view his tapes. 2. DOWNTOWN BRUNO, USWA/WMC: If this guy says, "It beez that way," one more time, Dave Brown has my permission to put Perma-Bond betwen Bruno's lips. 3. JACK BRICKHOUSE, NWA/HALLOWEEN HAVOC: Brickhouse may be a Chicago legend and I used to enjoy him on the Cubs' games but he's totally out of touch with today's wrestling.

WORST NEW CHARACTER: 1. THE BLACK SCORPION, NWA: I'm going to get arguments on this but I honestly believe this one hurt more than it helped and when he became an illusionist, it was time to quit. 2. MAGNUM FORCE, NWA: Or is it The Original Magnum Force? One of the guys is now trying out for a bird-calling school. Only he's the bird. 3. RAVISHING RUSS, PRO WRESTLING '90: Yeah, he was even worse than the Master Blasters and the Bowlers.

DECLINING STAR(S) OF THE YEAR: 1. JIM CORNETTE, NWA: Cornette being reduced to a mikeholder diluted the strength of his character and made him almost an invisible man during the heart of '90. 2. NORMAN, NWA: After being on the verge of becoming a major kids' character, the Trucker Norm bit was an embarrassment and a major waste of a good talent. 3. RONNIE GARVIN, WWF: After the ROYAL RUMBLE victory over Greg Valentine, his crash was worse than the Dow Jones this summer.

WORST TV PERSONALITY: 1. THUNDERBOLT PATTERSON, NWA: The act was old and never should have been brought out of mothballs. My old friend Fred Ward had to be haunted to see him back on the air. 2. HERB ABRAMS, UWF: Herb has finally left the commentary to someone else. Now, if he'd only do the same with the interviews. 3. MASTER BLASTERS, NWA: I don't know if I have ever seen two guys (or was it three?) struggle with interviews any more than the Blasters.

MATWATCH 1990 ANNUAL

The 1990 yearbook: WHAT WENT WRONG is tentatively slated for publication Jan. 20. Included this year:

---The 1990 MATWATCH PERSON OF THE YEAR and MATWATCHER OF THE YEAR.

---The MATTIES: the 1990 MATWATCH TV AWARDS.

---MATWATCH's Top 15 TV news stories of the year.

---The Wrestling Broadcasting System TV Log, an analysis of why 1990 failed to ring the bell of many wrestling fans, a story on "wrestling's latter days" by noted author Dr. Gerald Morton, comics---including the return of OSCAR, and a special segment, "A Week in the Life of MATWATCH."

Price: $12 (U.S./CANADA), $20 (OVERSEAS). Gift annuals earn you 3 bonus issues of MATWATCH. Check, cash or money order to: MATWATCH, 16 ROBIN HOOD LANE, JACKSON TN 38305.

NAME________________________________

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The Second Round

DUSTY: REKINDLED MAGIC OR RECYCLED MEDIOCRITY???

> "I am 'rasslin! I am TBS!
> I am the NWA!!!"
> ---Dusty Rhodes
> Dec. 31, 1988

It was a phrase parodied in its day as much as "I've fallen and I can't get up." A pitiful end to what had been one of television's most controversial wrestling eras and the epitome of what many observers feel led to the downfall of Dusty Rhodes in the Natinoal Wrestling Alliance.

Steve
Beverly

The scene was TBS' **WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING** and the segment was the awarding of one of the **PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED** yearender honors to Sting. Instead, Dusty took the ceremony for himself as Sting's stand-in and his "acceptance speech" turned into an abrasive campaign of self-promotion.

What has Dusty learned in two sometimes humiliating years since that embarrassing finale? We'll soon find out. The hours of speculation will soon end. **MATWATCH** has learned World Championship Wrestling, Inc., officials have written WWF owner Vince McMahon for formal permission to talk to Rhodes, though no public acknowledgement is forthcoming on the nature of the discussion. However, two key sources close to the situation have told **MATWATCH** published reports, including ours, of Rhodes becoming WCW booker are not wrong.

"The dates may have been wrong," says one source, "but he'll be here." Another source told us: "It's a 99% done deal. They just haven't told everybody yet."

In the last five weeks since talk of the Rhodes move began in earnest, a number of **MATWATCH**ers have offered their own view of how a new Rhodes bookership will fare. In offering my own analysis, I feel one has to look back at past history and relate it to the difference a return to Rhodes now creates.

JIM CROCKETT PROMOTIONS VS. TBS

The difference is significant: when Rhodes was hired as Crockett's booker in 1984, Jim Crockett Promotions was still a mid-Atlantic regional promotion a year away from exposure on TBS, despite the enormous success of the debut **STARRCADE**. Crockett produced two syndicated television series on about 35-40 stations and the promotion's wrestlers only traveled in four states. Getting Rhodes away from his years in Florida was considered a major coup for Crockett.

TBS, meanwhile, is a large conglomerate of more than 200 companies. Wrestling is only a small part of the entertainment empire---and to many in the organization, Rhodes will be just another cholesterol-endowed wrestler. His return to a role in the former NWA can hardly be called a tickertape homecoming. Further, Rhodes will face the task of developing nine hours of television per week, at least half of which has been criticized under the previous booking regime as being too repetitive.

AUTONOMY VS. INTERFACING

Jim Crockett gave Rhodes a virtual license to control the creative destinies of his company----everything from feud matches, finishes and talent selection to television production and announcer veto. This autonomy once led Rhodes to suggest changes in the classic **WAR GAMES** commercial, according to key sources, to a Hollywood producer (who developed the spot) because "I'm a genius in this business." That autonomy led Rhodes to disassemble the Crockett-purchased Universal Wrestling Federation only six months after the UWF merged with the NWA.

At TBS, unless he can lift the weekly shows to a 4.0 rating, Rhodes comes in as "one of the boys" in the executive quarters. He'll be given a reasonable, yet restricted, hand and time in guiding the creative fortunes of the group. Yet, this time, he faces the formidable Jim Herd as a layer of management which did not exist in the Crockett company. And on theupper floor of CNN Center sits WCW president Jack Petrik, who fired Rhodes after Dusty's embarrassing "spike-in-the-eye" TV angle with Road Warrior Animal in December 1988. The latter was a deliberately insubordinate attempt on the part of Rhodes to demonstrate his dominance over the NWA fortunes.

Whereas in JCP, Dusty was virtually Dusty Crockett, in TBS, he will have to report to people and interface with a myriad of facets of the Turner organization: Turner Home Entertainment, the TBS promotion and marketing department, Turner Program Sales. These groups are accustomed to organization, deadlines and consistency. They like meetings. In his other NWA life, Dusty did not.

The new Rhodes era, provided it materializes, raises several questions as well as offers several assurances. The issues are hardly less complex than when Rhodes departed.

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STEVE BEVERLY

(Continued on Page 4)

***IS RHODES STILL AN INNOVATOR?: Despite the intense criticism he faced upon leaving in early 1989, Dusty did develop some popular concepts. WAR GAMES was probably his greatest legacy to the genre. His expansion of the GREAT AMERICAN BASH to a regional summer tour, a concept since abolished, resulted in attendance increases. His creation of The Four Horsemen was the epitome of the antihero gang. Yet, Dusty continued to shove the BUNKHOUSE STAMPEDE down fans' throats with himself as the annual winner, laid an egg with The Midnight Rider and his TRIPLE TOWER OF DOOM effort to top WAR GAMES has never been repeated.

***HAS HE SATISFIED HIS RING AMBITIONS?: Of course, if losing to Virgil in less than two minutes around the WWF horn is not humility, I don't know what is. But as one trusted insider tells MATWATCH: "If Dusty tries to talk the company into a retirement tour or keeps coming out of retirement for special shots, he'll blow it. If he gets his son down here and tries to shove him down everybody's throat, he'll blow it." At 46, aside from a small contingent of Southern loyalists, Dusty is no longer a draw and Petrik should stick to his guns to keep him out of the ring.

***CAN HE WORK WITH AND DEVELOP YOUNGER TALENT?: Not the Nightstalker kind or even the Motor City Madman. Instead of the green musclemen, WCW needs to be finding the next Sting, the next Barry Windham, the next Rick Steiner---heaven forbid, the next Hulk Hogan, if one is to be found. If he can set aside his own vicarious ring instincts and develop quality new stars, he has a chance.

***CAN HE COPE WITH THE TELEVISION DEMANDS? As stated earlier, Rhodes has never had to deal with nine weekly hours of television. Insiders say his pattern in the past has been to exercise dominance over all facets of an operation. Ole Anderson created chaos when he initially convinced WCW to drop heel commentators from the shows. Of course, the company had to relent in the cases of the Freebirds and Paul E. Dangerously. If Dusty attempts his old exploits, they wil not work. No one man can creatively book and produce as much TV as TBS carries and syndicates on a singular basis. If he'll follow the advice of Jim Ross and others heavily involved in TV production, he'll be far better for it.

***IS DUSTY WILLING TO CHANGE?: His old scenario was to have a predominantly heel set of champions, namely piling the belts on the Four Horsemen. Of course, this era cries out for a strong babyface champion, which Sting should be but whom Anderson booked as anything but. Rhodes has to lay his cards on the line early whether he intends to stay his old course and try for another extended run with Flair as king, or exhort patience while WCW tries to undo the damage with Sting.

***CAN HE AVOID PANIC BOOKING?: Rhodes' last year with Crockett was marked with desperation. He turned 11 characters in his final five months, reintroduced his old Florida masked Midnight Rider character and had to rescind it within two weeks when the public hated it, then dove for the spike angle on the Saturday WCW show with Animal, which led to Dusty's undoing. Patience has not been a trademark of the NWA, nor of its fans under Ted Turner and one has to wonder if Rhodes has the virtue.

***DOES THIS SIGNAL A RE-EMERGENCE OF JIM CROCKETT IN WCW?: Many fans forget the Crockett family still owns a one-third share of World Championship Wrestling, Inc. Almost since the second month of Ric Flair's booking term, when Crockett began weekly written critiques for Petrik, the former NWA guru has repeatedly insisted the only booker capable of turning around WCW's fortunes at the arenas is Rhodes. If this move works, Crockett's views would have to be seen with more credibility than one who sank his company into bankruptcy in 1988.

Other questions remain. Except for his last month in the job, Rhodes had foisted nearly two years of all-squash match/90-second interview TV formats on the Turner audience, which saw the Saturday show sink to a 1.8 rating. Today's sophisticated audience will not stand for 11 matches in two hours of the Junkyard Dog vs. Rockhard Rick variety. As my newspaper columnist friend Richard Hyatt would say, "They won't sit still to watch Dale Veasey."

The situation is complex because of the downhill slide of Crockett Promotions in Rhodes' final 18 months. Some insiders have already written the move off as just another example of recycled mediocrity, much as in the constant shifting of major league baseball managers or NBA coaches. I think that's too early because one cannot judge how Rhodes can book when he's not an active performer. He has no track record.

My own view is that while Rhodes had his own volumes of tasteless angles (Flair as a sex pervert, Tully Blanchard hitting a cripple, i.e.), his creativity will certainly be an improvement on Anderson, who greeted us with Rocky King as Buckwheat and Flair as semi-racist. His biggest challenge will be in fighting the temptation to recreate the past. Anderson's worldview of "this is 1974 all over again. What worked then will work now" is a fatal trap. One WCW can ill-afford in 1991.

Pinfall Profile

STARRCADE: SOME AFTERTHOUGHTS

I remember well departing The Omni after last year's STARRCADE and my good friend Mike Gunter commenting, "It was a good show. I enjoyed it. But it just didn't seem like a STARRCADE."

I somewhat shared Mike's feelings but the emotion was different after this year's St. Louis affair. From a television standpoint, it was difficult not to find a little something for everyone. Jim Ross did a first-class producing job against innumerable odds, including late-in-the-day bickering over finishes.

If you wanted to see the end of the Black Scorpion, you saw it. If your taste leans toward an old-fashioned bloodbath, you saw it. If you enjoy the technique of Greco-Roman international-style maneuvers, the two Russians gave it to you. If you wanted to see a clean pin in the opener---and one which surprised many viewers---you had it.

A few random thoughts on the show several days after the Monday morning-quarterbacking has subsided:

> ---PAY-PER-VIEW SHOWS NEED AT LEAST ONE DOSE OF BRAWL FARE: The popularity of the Steiners-Nasty Boys' bout at HALLOWEEN HAVOC is one example. Already, the DOOM-Horsemen street fight is being talked of in PPV MATCH OF THE YEAR circles for next year. Hardcore NWA fans enjoy seeing a good bloodbath and if Turner doesn't want to show one on free TV, this is the place.
>
> ---FLAIR'S PERFORMANCE: No, this won't go down as one of the memorable matches of all time. But the degree of difficulty it must have been for Flair to masquerade his style for an entire 18 1/2 minutes and succeed with casual fans was a masterpiece.
>
> ---NUMBER OF MATCHES: I still contend 14 matches on a show, particularly in a two hour, 50-minute time frame, is far too many. What was good here is the matches which would have angered hardcores if they had gone interminably long were kept brief and the tourney format, while crowding the show, did not intrude on it. A fairly good formula is three matches per hour, or a maximum of ten over three hours.

The arena, however, reflected the state of the wrestling business in general. Insiders estimate about 800-1,000 seats in the storied Kiel were empty and the house was substantially papered. It goes to show while STARRCADE is the mother show of supercards and this certainly ranked as a fine evening, it no longer possesses its old mystique.

MATWATCH SHOPPERS NETWORK

GLOBAL WRESTLING, Tom Burke's veteran publication, has another interesting issue out. Price: $1.50 plus SASE. As an anniversary special, Tom is offering $7 for 5 issues and $21 for 15. Order from: 31 GROVELAND ST., SPRINGFIELD MA 01108.

WORLD WRESTLING FOCUS is a new bulletin from David Helmsley, 21 SHERWOOD ST., SCARBOROUGH, NORTH YORKSHIRE, YO11 1SR, ENGLAND. David features monthly reports on the WWF and other American groups. Price: 12 issues for 30 British pounds.

MAT MARKETPLACE, Sheldon Goldberg's bulletin on wrestling collectibles and memorabilia, is a good new one. Send to Sheldon at P.O. Box 2371, Jamaica Plain NY 02130. Cost: $2 an issue.

MICHAEL SALARDINO, 102 ROBBINS RD., SOMERVILLE NJ 08876, is after Japan tapes. He has USWA, NWA, WWF, UWF and MSG house shows to exchange, along with a list of over 300 tapes.

EVAN GINZBURG's WRESTLING THEN & NOW takes an offbeat approach, including interesting wrestling nostalgia and title histories. Order at $1.25 an issue from Evan at P.O. BOX 471, OAKLAND GARDENS STATION, FLUSHING NY 11364.

JOE PERRY, P.O. BOX 191425, SACRAMENTO CA 95819-1425, is anxious to trade his UWF tapes for PORTLAND, NEW JAPAN, ALL JAPAN or USWA. He's also interested in tapes of the old Roy Shires promotion in California in the early '70s.

HARVEY COBB's WRESTLING ENTERTAINMENT NEWS JOURNAL begins Jan. 1. A single issue is $2.25, six months $13.50 and a year is $27. Send to: 2619 RUFFIN WAY, NORFOLK VA 23504.

MATWATCH SUBSCRIPTIONS

Through Jan. 4, we offer a bonus: if you give a 5-issue gift set, you receive TWO free bonus issues of MATWATCH.
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(OVERSEAS) $9 for 5 issues, $18 for 11, $27 for 16.

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TV TEMPO

Dec. 17-23

(WWF/SYND.) - [CHALLENGE]: Jake Roberts d. Boris Zhukov; Shane Douglas d. Barry Hardy; (SPECIAL REPORT) ROYAL RUMBLE preview; Warlord d. Ron Cumberland; Jim Duggan d. Scott Colantonio; (SEGMENT) Jacques Rougeau as the Mountie; Legion of Doom d. Tony Ulysses/Duane Gill; (SEGMENT) Gobbledy-Gooker w. Sama Simba; Dino Bravo d. Jim Thomas. RESTHOLD.

(PRO WRESTLING '90) - Pretty Young Things d. Mountain Man/ Chief Little Lynn; Randy Rose d. Eddie Sweat; (From KANSAS) Tom Prichard d. Tom Leet; (From JAPAN) Antonio Inoki d. Hacksaw Higgins; Mike Winner d. Greg Richards; (From JAPAN) Yokota d. Omuri; Chris Walker/Curtis Thompson d. Ron Starr/ Joel Deaton by DQ. RESTHOLD.

(USWA/SYN) - [CHALLENGE]: Danny Davis d. J.D. Wolfe; Doug Gilbert d. Ben Jordan; Brickhouse Brown d. Tony Anthony by DQ; Jamie Dundee d. Tojo Yammamoto; [TEXAS DEATH MATCH] Eddie Gilbert d. Jeff Jarrett when Sam Bass Lowe runs in & Doug Gilbert sprays Jeff w. rag. RESTHOLD-PLUS.
[BEST OF CHAMPIONSHIP]: Davis d. Joseph Magliano; [USWA TAG TITLE] Anthony/D. Gilbert d. Jarrett/Cody Michaels to regain belts; [SOUTHERN TITLE] Jerry Lawler d. Eddie Gilbert by DQ when Anthony/Doug run in. Eddie retains belt; (INTERVIEW) Terry Funk on USWA title rematches; (6-MAN) New Kids/Steve Keirn d. Three Amigos. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(LPWA) - The Beast d. Ilona Starr; Bad, Black & Beautiful d. Bambi/Malaya Osaka; Susan Sexton d. LaGata. RESTHOLD.

(WWF/USA) - [PRIME TIME 300TH SHOW]: Undertaker d. Mario Mancini; L.O.D. d. Ulysses/Gill; Tugboat d. Warlord by DQ when Slick runs in. Tug tosses slick over top; Ted DiBiase d. Nikolai Volkoff; Dustin Rhodes d. Zhukov; (UPDATE) ROYAL RUMBLE news; Rick Martel d. Tito Santana; (BRO. LUV REPLAY) DiBiase tries to buy Dustin. Ted/Virgil doubleteam Dustin but Kerry Von Erich saves; (FLASHBACKS) Bobby Heenan bombs as Hollywood stuntman, is left stranded in a sinking boat, is shoved face-first into a cake by Gorilla Monsoon and has to push Gorilla in a cart in Atlantic City; (ANGLE) None of Bobby's invited guests show for the 300th edition until Alfred Hayes appears to present plaque to Gorilla. DRAW-PLUS.

(WCW/TBS) - [POWER HOUR]: Tom Zenk d. Buddy Landell; Ricky Morton d. Rip Rogers; Michael Wallstreet d. Italian Stallion; (WNN) Gordon Solie w. STARRCADE report; Other winners: Brian Pillman, JYD, Curtis Hughes/Motor City Madman. DRAW.
[WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP]: Rick Steiner d. Barry Horowitz; (ANGLE) Michael Hayes challenges Steiner to "captain's match" later in show during Paul E. interview. If Rick loses, Freebirds get U.S. tag title shot; if Hayes loses, Freebirds will never again challenge Steiners; (WRAPUP) Solie/STARRCADE report; Zenk d. Dutch Mantel; Wallstreet d. Tommy Rich in 6-minute-or-less challenge; (SEGMENT) Paul E. interviews Zenk/ Arn Anderson to set up next week's TV title match; (CAPTAIN'S MATCH) Hayes d. Steiner when Garvin uses 2x4 on Rick while ref's back is turned. DRAW-PLUS.
[MAIN EVENT]: Terry Taylor d. Wallstreet by DQ; Zenk d. Bobby Eaton by countout; (HANDICAP MATCH) Big Van Vader d. 2 jobbers; (SEGMENT) STARRCADE report; (ANGLE) No DANGER ZONE for second straight week. Paul E. fumes, boycotts the show and pickets the arena. Paul returns at show's end to argue w. Jim Ross. POWERSLAM.

SCALE: PINFALL! - Must See. PILEDRIVER - Excellent. POWERSLAM - Good. DRAW - Average. RESTHOLD - Fair. BOMB - Poor. PLUS - Midscale rating.

(ASWA FURY) - Cream Team d. Bob Starr/ Johnny Lawler; Beach Boy Vinnnie d. The Lunatic; Neal Superior d. The Red Scorpion; Warpig d. Bob Campony. BOMB.

(WCW/SYN) - [WORLD WIDE]: Pillman/Zenk d. Ed Brock/Joe Cezana; (WRAPU) STARRCADE recap; Bobby Eaton d. Ricky Morton when Freebirds run in; Curtis Hughes/Nightstalker d. Scott Allen/John Falken; Wallstreet d. Rick Hardrock; Terry Taylor d. Brian Carr; Freebirds d. Tommy Angel/Rob Morgan. RESTHOLD.

LINES OF THE WEEK

1. Bobby Heenan, WWF-C, on Snuka: "We could solve all the problems right now in Iraq. Just drain his hair. We'd have all the oil we need. Him and Bret Hart...we'd be in great shape." 2. Heenan/Gorilla Monsoon, WWF-C: (BH) "I shook his (Undertaker's) hand. It was like a 50-pound bag of ice." (GM) "Maybe you ought to lie down." 3. Ronald P. Gossett IV, WVEU, to Boni Blackstone/Samuel F. Kent: "You're just one step up from a welfare recipient." 4. Heenan/Monsoon, WWF-C, on Brain appearing on WWF MAGAZINE cover: (GM) "I understand it only sold six copies." (BH) "I know better. I bought 300 myself." 5. Heenan, WWF-C, on Paul Roma: "He thinks a lot of Hercules' sweat." 6. Joe Pedicino/Kent, PW'90: (JP) "This Curtis Thompson has made an impression on a lot of ladies in the state of Georgia. (SFK) "I'm no lady but he's made an impression on me." 7. Buddy Rose, PW'90: "You know what the 'N' stands for on the University of Nebraska football helmets? Knowledge." 8. Gossett, WVEU, to Blackstone: "I'm here looking for talent. You certainly have none." 9. Tony Schiavone, WWW: "I don't know if I would put that on my resume: found by Paul E. Dangerously." 10. Kent/Blackstone, WVEU: (SFK) "You are the greatest executive producer I've ever worked with." (BB) "I'm the ONLY executive producer you've ever worked with." 11. Jimmy Garvin, WCW PRO: "Lex Luger has had pectorial implants. I just hope they don't fall or drop." 12. Michael Hayes, WCW PRO, on Luger/Hansen: "It's a good thing their match was at the end of rope because Luger's at the end of HIS rope." 13. Gossett, WVEU, to Kent: "You act like you need a Beltone hearing aid."

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK - 1. Heenan, WWF-C, on Dwayne Gill: "Who's that? Charlie Rich?" 2. Heenan, WWF-C, on Snuka: "Does he peel his bananas like you?" Kent, WVEU, on being pre-empted: "Does that mean we don't have to work all week?" 3. Gossett, WVEU, to Blackstone: "Are you looking for the VISA tag, Barbara Mandrell?" 4. Scott Hudson, WVEU: "Who would you rather see? Junkyard Dog or Terry Power?" 5. Kent, WVEU, to Gossett: "What's the name of your video? FATNESS IS IN, FITNESS IS OUT?"

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. THE HOWDY DOODY OF WRESTLING (Hudson on Junior). 2. THE RONA BARRETT OF WRESTLING (Gossett on Blackstone).

ALL-CLICHE TEAM - 1. Dutch Mantel, WWW: "...bit off a little more than he can chew." 2. Hayes, WCW PRO: "...bit off more than he can chew." 3. Kent, PW'90: "...bit off more than he can chew." 4. Garvin, WCW PRO: "...bit off more than he can chew."

PASSWORD OF THE WEEK - Hayes, WCW PRO: "...ironical."

ENGLISH LESSONS - 1. Sir Samuel F. Kent, WVEU: "Everyone has SAW Steve Lawler." 2. Garvin, WCW PRO: "He DON'T take NO garbage from nobody." 3. Garvin, WCW PRO: "I think we should have THREW in at least two or three other guys." 4. Eddie Gilbert, WMC: "I have WENT out."

BLOOPER AWARD - Kent, PW'90: "That tag team has been called...what is it you call it? AWFADOX? (Pedicino answers, "You mean UNORTHODOX."

RATINGS RAP

WCW NOSES OUT PTW

IN TOTAL HOMES RACE

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING's pre-STARRCADE edition was strong enough to carry it to the victory in the Nielsen cable race for the week ending Dec. 17, though both WWF cable shows demonstrated a strong resurgence.

WCW and PRIME TIME WRESTLING tied in ratings, both with a 2.9 but WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP had the edge in total homes and share of audience.

PRIME TIME, with its 300th show special, replayed the Tito Santana-Rick Martel match from the NBC MAIN EVENT and offered Tugboat-Warlord and Dustin Rhodes-Boris Zhukov matches to round out the two-hour commemmorative.

ALL-AMERICAN WRESTLING, which has languished with two season lows in the last month, rallied to a 2.7 rating and rebounding 7.2 per cent share of audience to finish third for the week.

WCW MAIN EVENT, which scored a recent victory at a 3.1, fell back to 2.4/4.5 in the hour before STARRCADE.

POWER HOUR continued to stalemate at 1.5, one-tenth of a point below its average since its move to Saturday mornings in October.

CABLE

Week Ending Dec. 17	Rating	Share	Total Homes
WCW WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (TBS 12/15)	2.9	5.8	1.62 million
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 12/17)	2.9	4.3	1.57 million
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 12/16)	2.7	7.2	1.46 million
WCW MAIN EVENT (TBS 12/16)	2.4	4.5	1.34 million
NWA POWER HOUR (TBS 12/15)	1.5	5.8	840,000

Premieres in Fall

JESSE, ALZADO TAKE GRUDGES A NEW STEP

Take Judge Wapner and add violence to the courtroom, along with Jesse Ventura, and you have the newest element of "crash TV" for fall 1991.

Genesis Entertainment's GRUDGE MATCH, designed for late afternoon and late night weekend slots, is in the marketplace for syndication.

Ventura and former LEARNING THE ROPES star Lyle Alzado are co-color commentators along with play-by-play host Tim Brando of ESPN.

According to BROADCASTING magazine, the game pits people with real-life feuds into physical combat: "The pilot features a 'main event' featuring Mr. T battling a boxing promoter who failed to get him his 'promised' shot at former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson. The two other undercard bouts included two college students battling over the sharing of vacation expenses and an engaged couple duking it out over who covers the replacement cost of a stolen VCR."

Among the weapons contestants can use are oversized boxing gloves, greased medicine balls, plates of spaghetti, chocolate pudding, fire extinguishers and balloons full of vegetable oil. A scoring system will feature a "Compubox" computer to tally "hits." A panel of celebrity judges will decide the winner and how the loser will pay off.

Genesis is budgeting $120,000 per week to produce GRUDGE MATCH with 26 episodes scheduled in the first season and 26 repeats.

Genesis sales executive Phil Oldman has told BROADCASTING GRUDGE MATCH could expand to a daily half-hour show in 1992-93 if ratings and advertiser support is strong enough.

The syndicator is budgeting heavily for print and billboard promotions to tie in to the series.

One television executive who has had an advance screening of the pilot but asked not to be named told MATWATCH: "It's hot. It's likely to be one of the biggest sellers among weekend shows at the NATPE (television programmers) convention (in New Orleans in mid-January)."

Genesis is hoping to have 60 per cent of the country signed on for GRUDGE by the NATPE convention. First-year production costs will top $3 million.

MATWATCH NEWSLINE (901) 664-9246

Please bear with us. We are currently having telephone line problems.

MATWATCHING

POLLING: Your response on STARRCADE was signficantly positive. By Thursday night of last week, we had received 184 calls. The breakdown: 68% positive, 26% negative, 6% so-so or no opinion.

REALIGNMENT AT HAND: WCW events coordinators were reshuffled last week. Gordon Solie and Ron Ames are no longer handling promotions. David Crockett has been assigned to the west coast with WRESTLE WAR's Phoenix location apparently one of David's spots. Chip Burnham is being shifted to the Carolinas from his Georgia slot.

IN THE ORIENT: Jim Herd left last Tuesday for Japan on business for WCW. We're hearing plenty of optimism over the Tokyo Dome show. With our early deadline to get the double issue out, we did not have the card announced at a Thursday press conference.

ONE MORE POST-SCRIPT: In case people wonder about the double pin scenario, that was not the originally planned finish for the STARRCADE street fight. Teddy Long and Ron Simmons refused to do the job in the fashion presented, so the twin pin was a compromise.

ANDRE OUT: Andre the Giant definitely out for the ROYAL RUMBLE. He suffered either broken blood vessels or a blood clot in an ankle while riding in a taxi and will not be ready for a while.

KONAN TO GLOBAL: Hours after STARRCADE, Konan made a verbal agreement with Joe Pedicino's Global federation. Word has it Konan will premiere after the first of the year as the Global light heavyweight champion.

KONAN RECOVERING: Konan is home in Puerto Rico for the holidays. He's nursing the injury to his knee that limited his moves in STARRCADE. He's been advised to sit off of it three weeks.

IWA TOURNEY: Rob Russen's group plans its tag team finale in Cherry Hill NJ April 6. Russen is calling it the BRUISER BRODY tourney. IWA also will tour Arizona and southern California in February.

MESSAGE TO EDDIE: Lexington MATWATCHer George Maranville sends an S.O.S. to Eddie Gilbert. George says Lexington fans desperately want to see USWA action in their town. Since I'm not in the habit of distributing Eddie's home number, I'll tell him right here.

NEW WAVE: On the international front, NEW WAVE WRESTLING is the latest effort for British TV. Among the stars featured: the Right Rev. Constance McVicar, The Druid, Daddy Dread and Rudolph (The Swan) Kratowsky.

THE BIG PUSH: NEW WAVE is being packaged by top English independent producer Robert Farago, who reportedly is spending big bucks on production, semi-WWF style. Farago is said to be tailoring the American style of wrestling to British tastes.

WHERE'S THE RING?: The Dec. 17 issue of ADVERTISING AGE features a full-page color ad with eleven TV screens proclaiming "Three Letters are Number One in Cable Television---TBS." Braves baseball, THE ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW, countless other Turner program staples are pictured. No WCW.

GOSSETT'S BACK: Expect Ronald P. Gossett IV to make a significant return to GEORGIA ALL-STAR. Gossett is appearing on Atlanta's WVEU SUPERSTARS OF WRESTLING, annoucing he is "scalping talent."

NEW FACES: Pedicino's Global duties will force him to give up the GAS play-by-play work. New co-hosts will probably appear with Pedicino at the Jan. 20 GAS tapings but the pairings have not been announced.

WWF BACK: Titan Entertainment has returned WWF CHALLENGE to the WVEU schedule. Negotiations broke down over a new slot for CHALLENGE on Fox affil WATL, so CHALLENGE will stay on the Atlanta Saturday night marathon as the kickoff in January. The new lineup: 8:00 WWF CHALLENGE, 9:00 LPWA, 10:00 USWA, 11:00 THE NEW PRO WRESTLING THIS WEEK, 12:00 MEMPHIS, 1:00 DALLAS, 2:00 ICW.

GLAD GLADIATORS: ROLLERGAMES was an early casualty of last year's "crash TV" binge but AMERICAN GLADIATORS is the little show that has quietly built ratings strength. Three times this fall, it has cracked syndication's top 15 and is averaging a 4.0 for the season.

IN THE ARENAS: Samuel Goldwyn Company (the syndicator) officials are looking to take the GLADIATORS format into arenas and are negotiating for Madison Square Garden or Los Angeles' Great Western Forum as possible locales.

POSITIONING GRUDGE: Genesis Entertainment (see page 8) is trying to position GRUDGE MATCH, the new series with Jesse Ventura, as a companion hour to AMERICAN GLADIATORS on weekend schedules. Something tells me this one will click.

TAPING AHEAD: WCW returns to Columbus GA for a TV taping Jan. 15 and has a date Jan. 14 in the new arena in Perry GA, a town where my basketball team school bus broke down one February evening at midnight. Perry is also the home of Sen. Sam Nunn.

MATWATCH 1990 ANNUAL

Your response has been heartening to the 1990 MATWATCH ANNUAL, which may have its biggest buy-in ever. Publication is scheduled Jan. 20. Our MATWATCH PERSON OF THE YEAR, MATWATCHER OF THE YEAR and the year's top 15 TV news stories, along with our Wrestling Broadcasting System TV Log and the 1990 MATTIES: the MATWATCH TV AWARDS will be featured.

Price: $12 (U.S./CANADA), $20 (OVERSEAS). CHECK, CASH or MONEY ORDER to: MATWATCH, 16 ROBIN HOOD LANE, JACKSON TN 38305. Gift annuals earn you 3 bonus issues of MATWATCH.

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TIME OUT: ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS

(EDITOR'S NOTE: In recent weeks, many of you have dropped assorted questions in our mailbag, along with your subscriptions and comments. For the third consecutive year, we'll take part of this holiday double issue to answer these questions head-on as succinctly as possible. Thanks for the inquiries.)

Q: DO YOU THINK WE'RE SEEING THE LATTER DAYS OF WRESTLING, WHAT WITH ITS DECLINE IN POPULARITY THIS YEAR? (Mark Bonner, Wichita Falls TX)

A: Latter days is probably too harsh a term. I'm saving part of this answer for a 10-page analysis in the MATWATCH 1990 ANNUAL but, Mark, I do believe wrestling is in an inevitable inertia that has been created by its own excesses. In short, I do think much of the wrestling public, even if only subconsciously, recognizes it is seeing little new and what innovation is being attempted is not bringing them out to the arenas in droves. Hulk Hogan is the only superstar who can genuinely advance house sales and even he can't guarantee sellouts. Most of it is the end result of too many lackluster TV shows, too many available shows and the indisputable fact that national promotions chew up talent as fast as the public's fickle tastes abandon rock groups. But wrestling will always be around in some fashion. It just remains to be seen who can come up with packaging new enough to freshen its impact with fans.

Q: YOU'RE ALWAYS COMPLIMENTARY OF JIM ROSS. BUT WHO DO YOU THINK IS THE GREATEST ANNOUNCER OF ALL TIME AND WHO DO YOU THINK ARE THE BEST YOUNG ANNOUNCERS? (Marjorie Westfield, Vero Beach FL)

A: I answered that in a Fourth of July double issue in 1989 but we had about half our current subscriber base. That's easy. Ed Capral, who hosted BIG TIME WRESTLING and LIVE ATLANTA WRESTLING (later ALL-SOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING and Jim Crockett's WIDE WORLD WRESTLING) from 1954-74. He had the ability to make a wrestling contest have the sports-oriented impact of a Sunday NFL confrontation and was the most believable commentator I've ever heard. Wrestling fans today are poorer for not being exposed to Ed's brand of play-by-play and I honestly believe he would be a great teacher for some of the young announcers in interview techniques and selling false finishes. A truly fine man, whom I count as a regular pen pal.

As for the top young guys, three names come to mind: Chris Cruise, Craig Johnson and Mick Karch. I hope the Crispy Cruiser lands back on his feet behind the mike somewhere because he had an authoritative, yet low-key approach I believe could wear well for years. Johnson has a strong sports background and truly loves wrestling and is learning more intricacies about good commentary every week. Karch has hosted a wrestling marathon show in the Twin Cities for a while (a la Atlanta's Saturday night SUPERSTARS OF WRESTLING) but I was quite impressed with Mick's vocal quality on the IWA shows before they departed SPORTS CHANNEL AMERICA.

Q: YOU AND WADE KELLER WERE TAKEN TO TASK IN WADE'S NEWSLETTER ABOUT BEING USED BY EDDIE GILBERT. HOW DO YOU RESPOND? (Richard Gillis, Greensboro NC)

A: There is an old adage: never, never, never answer your critics. And I'm tempted not to in this case. Anyone who feels Wade and I were used is entitled to that view. Someone could probably suggest that in some fashion about every story in journalism. My only comments are these: in my spring one-on-one interview with Eddie in MATWATCH, Eddie wanted to talk about his future plans. He discussed his dispute with WCW over the nature of his injury. He talked about his impending divorce with Missy Hyatt and how it was amicable. It did happen and the two are still friendly enough they still talk. He discussed his desire to open a quick-change oil business in his hometown of Lexington TN. I spent two afternoons with Eddie in which I twice saw him look over separate

(Continued on Page 11)

TIME OUT

(Continued from Page 10)

proposals for such a business. One of them was for a Jiffy-Lube franchise which was offered by a wrestling broadcaster who handles those sales. I find nothing wrong with that. At the time of our interview, Eddie had already told WCW executive vice president Jim Herd he no longer wanted to accept the company's money, despite the fact that he was still under contract. Herd later gave him his release under amicable circumstances. The only element of that interview I can argue could be defined as being "used" would be over discussion of the condition of Eddie's shoulder. Some readers felt Eddie exaggerated the extent of his injury in print to obtain that release and resented Eddie getting in the Memphis ring three weeks afterward. Only Eddie knows the extent or limit of that injury. Considering the intent of that interview was simply a rare chance to get a "what's going in the mind of a wrestler" focus, I don't apologize for one bit of it. Frankly, I don't think WCW made its decision to release Eddie based on either what was written in *MATWATCH* or *PRO WRESTLING TORCH*.

WHO DO YOU SEE AS THE COMING STARS OF WRESTLING? (Jim Cole, Hays KS)

Jim, all of my answers have to be qualified by saying it depends on whether they're marketed properly. Definitely, I am quite high on Konan (el Barbaro), who has mat, aerial and psychological skills well beyond his years and truly is a thinking-man's wrestler.

Jeff Gaylord, if he can get experience against quality workers, has a promising look. He needs to be costumed flashier and his personality more focused but he has that all important p: potential.

Now that Mark Callaway has been handed the gimmick no one else could find as Kane the Undertaker, he is headed for major stardom but I don't think it will be long-term. If he's tossed against Hulk Hogan in 1991, he'll have one good year and then downhill. But with lack of good Hogan opponents, the *WWF* may have no choice.

The Georgia group has two young kids who are terribly green but with seasoning and proper packaging, could advance: Chris Walker and Fabian. Neither is ready for big-league competition but there is a look about those two I like.

In the small indie circuits, keep your eye on Axel Rotten. Axel will never be a big-league wrestler but he has tremendous possibilities as a manager. If you get *HOME TEAM SPORTS*, check out Axel on the ASWA show Saturdays. I think his personality can put him on the map.

Q: YOU TALKED ABOUT A PROCESS CALLED "CHROMA-KEY" ON WRESTLING SHOWS IN ONE OF YOUR PREVIOUS ISSUES BUT I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT IT IS. (Jerry Groom, Metairie LA)

A: And you may not after this. Chroma-key (a similar process is called a "matte") is an electronic method in television for superimposing pictures on pictures. It is how Vince McMahon and Roddy Piper appear to be in an arena on *WWF SUPERSTARS* when actually, they are in a studio.

The tape operator cues the video of the fans yelling in the coliseum. Vince and Roddy are standing in front of a colored wall (probably blue or green) in a studio. The color is used to "key" in the hosts. A crane camera slowly lowers on Vince and Roddy in the studio and gives them a rising appearance. The key literally cuts an electronic hole in the picture of the arena and allows the announcers to be inserted.

Here's an interesting note: the same process is used with your local weathercaster on TV. He or she points to fronts and pressure areas on a map. But if you saw the person in the studio, that map would not be behind them. The forecaster is standing in front of and pointing at a blank, colored wall. He glances at an off-screen monitor to see the on-air picture and guide the direction of his pointing.

Another note: you can't wear clothes the color of the chroma-key wall, or the video will appear in those clothes. If you are in front of a blue chroma-key wall and you wear a blue shirt, the video will show up on-air where your shirt is. Once, when I worked at WTVM in Columbus GA, the weathercaster's eyes were so blue, the video maps appeared in her eyes, so the station changed the wall to green.

In short, the process is much like when a photographer takes a composite picture and "pastes" in a shot of a person over a picture of a background location, perhaps the person never visited. Hope that helps answer the question.

SUBSCRIBER NOTE

Because of the Christmas-New Year holidays, MATWATCH will not be published next week. This double issue counts for the week of Dec. 31-Jan. 6. Next MATWATCH printing date is Jan. 7 and the issue will be mailed Jan. 8.

TIME OUT

(Continued from Page 10)

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THE FINAL PAGE

If you don't think putting together a newsletter is a chore, try doing a double issue in three nights while working on an annual. The year 1991 marks the golden anniversary of wrestling on television. Fifty years since the first bell was rung on experimental TV in Los Angeles.

Many of you have written to ask if my research on the subject will ever be published. We are seriously considering doing so in the summer of this year. The volume is 232 pages and has a ridiculously academic title. But we're looking to publish under the name **THE GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY OF TV WRESTLING: 1941-91.**

It will be a more expensive volume to distribute but I feel it would be a collectors' item, taking one back to the early days of primitive studios and broadcasts, the first network era of wrestling in the 1940s and '50s, the return to regionalism, Ted Turner's expansion onto a satellite and the McMahon TV explosion.

I am not asking for any orders but I would like to see a response from you on post cards as to whether you would be interested in such a book-length project. With the exception of a short update to the final chapter, it is already written. The price would have to be in the $25-30 range. Please drop me a short line on the back of a post card if this would be something you would want.

I do think this year's **MATWATCH 1990 ANNUAL** will be a good one for analysis. There isn't a lot of breakthrough innovations one can report on but we're calling it **WHAT WENT WRONG** because that is where we focus our analysis: why 1990 was as lackluster a year as any in the last ten for pro wrestling. If you haven't ordered, please consider it because I think you'll find it worthwhile reading.

Again, the very best to you and your families during these holidays ahead and may the God of peace bring you blessings beyond compare in 1991.

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